

# **MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH MANAGEMENT UNIT**

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF RESEARCH RESULTS**

### ***GENERAL***

The purpose of conducting research is to improve upon current practices at MDT and to advance the level of knowledge in transportation issues. The process by which research results are put into practice is termed implementation. Federal Highway Administration regulations (23 CFR 420.207(8)(6)) require the active implementation of appropriate research findings and documentation of benefits.

Each research project is undertaken with the specific intent of eventually providing solutions to transportation problems or generating useful information. The findings of each project must be carefully assessed to determine those which offer potential benefits if implemented. Implementation is the logical follow-up and application of research results which provide the basis for adopting innovations into practice. This is the primary goal of MDT research. Therefore, if the intent of research is accomplished and the results (positive, negative, or neutral) are implemented, the project has been a success. The significance of this fact cannot be overemphasized.

Therefore, project success depends upon implementation, however, implementation does not occur on its own. It must be considered and planned for prior to starting research activities on any particular project and carried through beyond the research contract period. The actual process of implementing transportation research is dependent upon a valid strategy and a dedicated effort by the various parties involved.

### ***IMPLEMENTATION***

The typical objective of the implementation phase of research is to create an atmosphere leading to improvement, to encourage efficiency and to reduce costs to MDT. Successful implementation of findings requires a determined effort by both the researchers and the potential users, who must be convinced of the applicable benefits.

#### **A. Principal Investigator (PI)**

As a part of the proposal, the Principal Investigator will make suggestions for potential implementation and as a vital part of the final report, the Principal Investigator must make recommendations for implementation of the research.

#### B. Technical Panel (TP)

Upon completion of the project, the Technical Panel makes their recommendations or reviews the recommendations of the Principal Investigator (if the project was a contracted research project), evaluates the validity of the research, and recommends any changes in policy, procedures, or practices which should be adopted. As specifically as possible, the Panel defines what action should be taken and identifies which offices in the Department should be responsible for the completion of this action. The panel may recommend:

- ▶ Specific Changes;
- ▶ Policy Changes;
- ▶ Design Changes;
- ▶ Additional Research; or
- ▶ No Change.

These recommendations should be submitted in writing to the RRC, through the Research Management Unit (RMU). When the implementation plan is effected, the project's Technical Panel is dismissed, and the project is considered complete.

#### C. Research Review Committee (RRC)

The Research Review Committee considers the recommendations of the Principal Investigator and the Technical Panel. The committee's recommendations will be placed on the VAX BBS and distributed to the Districts for input of comments. Then, the Committee will submit its recommendations as to what extent the panel's findings should be adopted, in writing through the RMU, to the appropriate Administrator.

#### D. Administrator

The Administrator determines if research results should be implemented and notifies the RMU of:

- ▶ the implementation schedule, including the specific actions to be taken and a time frame for each action; and
- ▶ any implementation action taken.

If the implementation of research results affects more than one Division, the Administrator, under the team environment of this Department, will include other Division and District Administrators, as appropriate, in the above process.

#### E. Research Management Unit (RMU)

The RMU submits an implementation report to the Director and Executive Staff as new information is obtained from the Administrator. At this time, the Director or individuals on the Executive Staff may request to participate in the process described in Section D. The RMU will be informed of any action taken on the implementation of research results at Executive Staff meetings, through meeting minutes. The RMU also publishes, twice yearly, a Research Implementation Status Report. The report lists the Administrator(s) responsible for the implementation, status of each recommendation or the date it was completed, and a statement on the success of the implementation once completed. Since the RMU follows each project from inception through completion and implementation, the RMU is responsible for coordinating the implementation of each research project.